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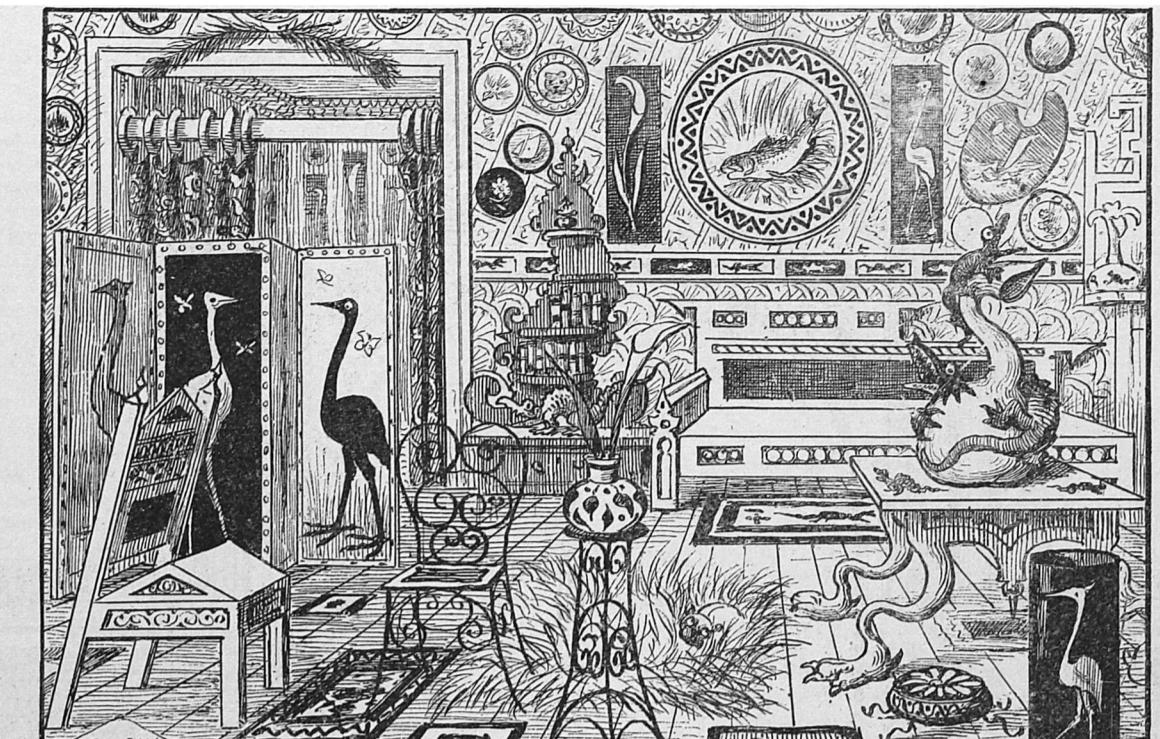
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ESTHETIC IDIOSYNCRASIES.

IT is difficult to understand, with the ideas that prevail among modern young men and young ladies, how art can be other than irrational, and we can reconcile almost any monstrosity in speech, and manner, and taste, with a love for fob ribbons and the angular carriage of arms and elbows. The damoiselles who carry a weight of crinoline and dignity on "the Avenue" every pleasant afternoon, whose elbows extend out beyond even the influence of their smiles, and the young gentlemen who display an exceedingly tight and therefore an excessively slender pair of pantaloons, whose gaiters are prettily checked above the leather and rounded off in a delightfully "too too" French heel, finished up with a battered silver-headed cane and a hat of huge proportions, these things may be works of art in "a high esthetic sense," but we doubt whether they could be added to the de Cesnola collection without exciting comment, or find a niche in the Louvre or the British Museum. And yet these animated monoliths set our fashions, and to some extent, shape our art. Their more advanced notions prevail in furnishing the house, and blue, and green, and red, and yellow cows and dogs and the rest of the domestic and otherwise harmless animals, are distributed about on vases and umbrella-stands and jardinieres, made to eat up salmon-colored forests and "crushed strawberry" grass plots. That's the sort of thing coming as a first warning to us, of the approaching "decorative lunacy," and may be attributed in part to the binocle of

the growing youth, and the nonchalant gait of the adolescent maiden. An entirely modern plan of operations prevails, and the self-made amateur artist buys a copy of "How to furnish Wildely," or some other atrocity, gleans everything from it that's worthless, and puts the gleanings into practice; and then what things are discovered, and raked together, and shown off! Glasses shaped like lilies, and morning glory's, and sunflowers, and buttercups, horrible to look at and impossible to drink from. The old candelabra is hunted up and we are confronted with wax candles growing out of tulips, japonicas or tube roses, or Jupiter's head gives birth, not to the peerless Minerva, but to a tallow dip, and the messenger of the gods, instead of bearing tidings of wonderful improvements that the contractor for the universe is about undertaking, meekly holds forth the precious candle and finds room in his girdle for the snuffers. Metal and porcelain leaves stand erect upon their extremest points, as if they were frightened into an unnatural rigidity by the awe-inspiring surroundings. Chairs that might bear the weight of an ordinary young daughter of the family, together with her evening company, are replaced by others than can under no possible circumstances sustain even the most ethereal of young ladies alone. Sofas, that made one sleepy to look at, are discarded for an esthetic structure with all the latest improvements in the way of ebonized pine, and delicate legs, and inlaid veneering, and everything else that can make it elegant, and aristocratic, and uncomfortable.

So these delightfully fashionable young people, having finished the ornamentation with a Jacob's Well that draws ink, and a Solomon's Temple that serves as a pen wiper, prepare to throw out the furniture of the upper stories, and have moments of delirium before a grate too delicate to hold a fire, a table with a carved ornament standing up in the centre, to the detriment of everything upon it, or a medieval chair too ponderous to move and too angular to sit in, or with legs twisted and contorted to such an extent as to cause us to fear our weight will destroy the nice equilibrium it seems to depend upon for support. Before long, we presume, the spare room carpet of our ancestors will be swept of its dust and spread upon the floor as an element of the beautiful; we will then see beneath us roses



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that must have flourished in prehistoric days, sized like the mastodon, or fruit that we fear to crush at every step, or savage animals, belligerent lions and hydrophobic dogs that scowl upon us with stony eyes and pitiless jaws, making us tremble in our anxiety to avoid inciting the brutes to a merciless slaughter.

If, however, modern esthetes are thus to decorate our homes, we should certainly require that they be consistent, and live strictly up to the age they portray in their furnishings. We cannot, certainly, out of due regard for the feelings of our common father, Time, drink tea in a Roman room, or enjoy our morning newspaper under the shadow of Tudor decorations, while a Japanese boudoir embellished in early English would be an unpardonable anachronism. If we bear these things, may we not be justified in demanding even a costume suitable to the epoch represented? Can anything else than a chlamys or chiton be reconciled to Hellenic surroundings? or should a toga be discarded because, forsooth, it may not suit the particular angles of the wearer? We are thoroughly satisfied that there can be no excuse for neglecting the minutest details in this arrangement of decoration, to correspond with the various eras, and if it is adopted in household economy, should it not be extended to the pastimes and the pleasures of the people? At our interesting ball matches or cricket games, Bancroft might be called upon to read a few volumes of his history of the United States or a half a dozen years issue of the Patent Office Reports, as Herodotus and Xenophon were wont to do at Grecian festivals, and when this intellectual perfection is attained,